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## **The Challenge Faced by Hindu Women in Doing Their *Swadharma* in the Midst of Modernisation**

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### **Abstract**

Hindu women who are already in the Grhasta period play an important role in the family. In their married life, women have several obligations for the harmony of their family. The word 'woman' comes from the word '*wanitā*', the feminine sex, which means beloved, wife, girl, woman, female (Semadi Astra, 2000: 372). Based on that sense, the word 'woman' means beloved, indicating that women are part of social life and family is part of the composition of social creatures that spread love to the surrounding environment, likewise their effort to enforce the Swadharma in their life. However, there are several obstacles regarding the efforts of women in implementing their Swadharma to create harmony in the family, society, and workplace.

The Hindu women in Bali began to show their existence in their family life, society, nation, and state. Women's participation in the family is very meaningful. A woman as a wife and mother in the family has an important role in creating the harmony of the family as well as mental development of her children. In addition to taking care of the family, now women also participate in helping the family finances. Hindu women in Bali do not want to be housewives only and ask the husband for the household expenses. Many women are now beginning to participate to help family finances by working at home and outside. Even some mothers really want to fight alone for their children. It simply proves that women can also act as the head of a family just as a father.

**Keywords:** Hindu Women

## I. Introduction

The advancement of science and technology requires all parties to participate themselves in the utilization of the progress of science and technology. This also touches social life in Bali, especially for Hindu women. Hindu women nowadays seem like do not want to be left behind to compete themselves with men in the field of education and workplace. Now there are so many Hindu women vying with others to have education as high as possible. Now, the Hindu women in Bali have got their right to be able to study like men. In the world of education, women are not less competitive in getting skills and achievement compared with men. In addition, many women are also competing with men in the workplace. These phenomena show that the movement of women's emancipation initiated by one of the heroines R.A Kartini is not in vain.

Hindu women in Bali began to show their existence in their family life, society, nation, and state. Women's participation in the family is very meaningful. A woman as a wife and mother in the family has an important role in creating the harmony of the family as well as mental development of her children. In addition to taking care of the family, now women also participate in helping the family finances. Hindu women in Bali do not want to be housewives only and ask the husband for the household expenses. Many women are now beginning to participate to help family finances by working at home and outside. Even some mothers really want to fight alone for their children. It simply proves that women can also act as the head of a family just as a father.

Hindu women's participation in helping the family finances increases their

obligations or *swadharma*. This situation makes Hindu women must be able to manage their time as well, so that all their *swadharma* can be done fully. Hindu women must be able to manage their time, so they can carry out their *swadharma* in the family, community, and workplace. All of their *swadharma* must be well executed in order to achieve harmony in their family life, community, and workplace. If one of those obligations cannot be implemented properly, then it will certainly cause problems in the family, community, as well as the workplace. Many kinds of *swadharma* that must be implemented by women in the family, society, and workplace cause some obstacles in their efforts to make them all balance.

## II. Discussion

Hindu women who are already in the *Grhastha* period play an important role in the family. In their married life, women have several obligations for the harmony of their family. The word 'woman' comes from the word '*wanitā*', the feminine sex, which means beloved, wife, girl, woman, female (Semadi Astra, 2000: 372). Based on that sense, the word 'woman' means beloved, indicating that women are part of social life and family is part of the composition of social creatures that spread love to the surrounding environment, likewise their effort to enforce the *Swadharma* in their life. However, there are several obstacles regarding the efforts of women in implementing their *Swadharma* to create harmony in the family, society, and workplace.

## 2.1 The Challenges of Hindu Women in Doing Their *Swadharma*

Before discussing further the challenge or obstacle of Hindu women in doing their *swadharma*, it is necessary to elaborate the meaning of the word 'obstacles'. Based on Indonesian Dictionary, the word 'obstacles' means 'circumstance' or 'overcomes' (Authors, 1991: 201). Based on the meaning of the word 'obstacles', the obstacles of Hindu women in doing their *swadharma* in their respective places, are obstacles or circumstances that restrict Hindu women from doing their *swadharma*. In their daily life, Hindu women truly face some obstacles in doing their *swadharma*.

When Hindu women are prevented from doing their *swadharma*, then it will automatically cause problems. According to the assumptions of conflict theory, problems arise because of the imbalance between expectations and reality, conditioned by the unbalanced options between two contradictory things that trigger social conflict (Raho, 2007: 71). Based on the result of field observations and interviews with some informants, the obstacles faced by Hindu women in doing their *swadharma* were grouped into three, namely, the obstacles in the family, the obstacles in society, and the obstacles in the workplace.

### 2.1.1 Obstacles in the Family

Hindu women have a big responsibility in their family life. They have various *swadharma* in the family. According to the sacred literature of Manawa Dharmasastra, it was described that the *swadharma* of Hindu woman in the family is as follows.

*Utpadanamapatyasya jatasya  
paripalanam,  
Pratyaham lokayatrayah pratyaksam  
strinibandhanam.*

(Manawa Dharmasastra IX.27)

Translation:

"Childbirth, nurturing the born, and everyday life for children, all women are the cause" (Sudharta, 2004: 445).

*Apatyam dharmakaryani susrusa  
ratiruttama,  
Daradhinastatha swargah pitri  
rnnanatmanascaha.*

(Manawa Dharmasastra IX.28)

Translation:

The descendants, the obedience of religious ceremonies, the faithful servants, the intercourse of pleasures, and the reaching of the heaven to the ancestors and the one, dependent on the wives themselves (Sudharta, 2004: 445).

In accordance with the sloka contained in the sacred literature of Manawa Dharmasastra IX. 27-28, the *swadharma* of Hindu women in the family, are, giving birth to children, nurturing children who have been born, becoming educators in the family, as the executor of religious ceremonies, as the partner for husband, as the source of happiness of the ancestors, and as a benchmark of family life. There are many *swadharma* that Hindu women have to do in the family. It makes them should be able to manage their time for all the *swadharma* to be carried out fully. In implementing a series of *swadharma* in the family, there are certainly some obstacles faced. There are several obstacles faced in implementing *swadharma* as a Hindu woman in the family.

*Swadharma* as a woman in the family is a huge responsibility. There are several obstacles faced in implementing the *swadharma*. One of the obstacles faced in carrying out *swadharma* in the family which is difficult to manage by a Hindu woman is the time when religious ceremony comes. Sometimes, one of the *swadharma* is neglected due to the focus on the preparation of the ceremony.

Obstacles faced by Hindu women in implementing their *swadharma* in the family is, for instance, it is difficult to set the time to carry out *swadharma* when the ceremony came. As it is known, that the success of a *yajna* ceremony depends on the role of the Hindu woman in it. The density of ceremonies carried out cause Hindu women a bit difficult in implementing their *swadharma* in the family. Even because they should focus on the implementation of religious ceremony, then, the other *swadharma* should be postponed for a while.

The limitation of Hindu women's abilities, in addition, is an obstacle for Hindu women to implement their *swadharma* in the family. For Hindu women who are already at a rather old age, not all *swadharma* in the family can surely be done as well. The limitation of ability possessed by women in implementing their *swadharma* can be an obstacle to implement other *swadharma*. There are so many *Swadharma* of women in the family. Sometimes not all *swadharma* can be done properly. In a state of illness, for example, the ability to implement *swadharma* is slightly inhibited. In addition, the increasing age is also a limitation for Hindu women in doing their *swadharma* in the family.

Limitations of Hindu women become obstacles in doing their *swadharma* in the family. For example, the state of illness becomes a limitation in doing their *swadharma* in the family. Limitations due to an old age are also an obstacle in doing their *swadharma* in the family. Limitations of the ability can also be an obstacle in doing their *swadharma* in the family, such as doing homework, parenting, and other *swadharma*. Hindu women also experience obstacles in addition to educating and nurturing.

Parenting is the most important *swadharma* for Hindu woman, it is truly because mother's ability to nurture and educate children in the family will determine the future of the children. However, there are still many Hindu women who do not have an understanding in educating and nurturing their children. The lack of understanding of educating and raising children is also a problem in doing their *swadharma* in the family. The lack of understanding of mother in nurturing and educating children at home is also one of the obstacles faced by Hindu women in doing their *swadharma* in the family. Various obstacles faced by Hindu women in doing their *swadharma* in the family can lead to conflict in the family. This is in line with the assumptions of conflict theory. Conflict theory holds that conflicts arising from the social paradigm will affect the internal conflict of individuals in the aspects of social life. This theory holds that every society has the interests and powers that are central to every relationship of men and women (Raho, 2007: 71-90).

### **2.1.2 Obstacles in Society**

Hindu women have *swadharma* that are not much different from men in society.

Hindu women are responsible for every *piodalan* in the temple of the village. In running their *swadharma* as a member of society, women face several obstacles. There are several obstacles faced in implementing *swadharma* in society. *Swadharma* of women in society is also as hard as men. Hindu women who move as members of *serati banten* and *PKK* have a greater *swadharma* than other women. In fact, sometimes a clash of schedules happen between *swadharma* in the community with *swadharma* in the family. In such circumstances, Hindu women feel confused to carry out their *swadharma*.

There are many *swadharma* should be conducted by Hindu women in the village led to frequent clashes between their *swadharma* in family and society. Especially for Hindu women who are members of *serati banten* and *PKK*, they will have difficulty in arranging their time to be able to do the *swadharma*. In addition, the clash between working time and *ngayah* time also be a problem for Hindu women. Many *swadharma* that must be implemented by Hindu women in the village become obstacles in implementing their *swadharma* in society.

### 2.1.3 Obstacles in the Workplace

Hindu women in addition to implementing *swadharma* in family and society also have *swadharma* in their workplace. For Hindu women who work outside the home often experience obstacles in carrying out *swadharma* at home and in the community. The activities which should be conducted at the same time between activities in the community with activities at work make them must choose one of the *swadharma* that should be done. An obstacle that often encountered in implementing their

*swadharma* is often a clash of schedule of activities in the community and workplace. Thus, they must choose one of *swadharma* that can be done. When one of the *swadharma* cannot be conducted, it will lead to conflict in the internal individual for Hindu women.

Hindu women face obstacles in doing their *swadharma* in the world of work. When the activities in the community are held together with the time of work, then the Hindu woman must determine one of the *swadharma* that should be done. When one *swadharma* cannot be implemented, it will cause the occurrence of imbalance and can cause problems in society. A series of indigenous activities held by women should take permission from the workplace. According to Ni Made Dresti, customary activities are a bit of an obstacle in doing her *swadharma* in the workplace. If she is too often had permission from the workplace, then she will surely get the warning from her boss. In such a case it really becomes a self-conflict when choosing one of the *swadharma*.

Obstacles that arise will have an impact on the occurrence of social conflict. This is in accordance with the following conflict theory assumptions. Conflict theory has assumed that conflict arises because of an imbalance between expectations and reality conditioned by unbalanced options between two contradictory things that trigger social conflict. Conflicts arising from the social paradigm will affect the internal conflict of individuals in the aspects of social life. This theory holds that every society has the interests and powers that are central to every relationship of men and women (Raho, 2007: 71-90).

## 2.2 The Efforts in Doing Swadharma of Hindu Women

Efforts are made to find a way out of a problem. Hindu women in carrying out *swadharma* face several obstacles. Obstacles faced in doing their *swadharama* can be in any form. In order to achieve harmony in doing their *swadharama*, then it needs to take an effort. Hindu women try to find a way out for obstacles encountered in doing their *swadharma*.

The theory used in examining the efforts made in doing their *swadharma* is the theory of social relations. This theory begins with the reconstruction of historical materialism, in which the human potential, the species of living beings, and the human activity are callous as their starting point. Habermas contains the distinction between work and interaction as a starting point though tends to use action term (work), purposive rationale, and communicative action (interaction). Habermas distinguishes between instrumental action and strategic action. Both involve the quest for self-interest that is taken into account (Habermas, 1979: 95).

### 2.2.1 Efforts to Do the Swadharma Harmoniously in the Family

Hindu women always try to do their *swadharma* based on good interaction with others around them in order to achieve harmony. In the conditions when they are not possible to implement their *swadharma*, then they always tell others around them, so that the obligations can be perfectly done. The effort undertaken by Hindu women in doing their *swadharma* harmoniously in the family is to maintain good coordination and communication with the husband as well as

the whole family members. When *swadharma* in the family cannot be done due to some reasons, then Hindu women try to coordinate it with family members to assist them to do the *swadaharma* in the family.

*Swadharma* of Hindu women in the family is not only the responsibility of a wife or mother. Husbands and children in the family also have a responsibility to help to do the *swadharma*. There is a need for good coordination and communication between family members in order to achieve harmony within the family. When mothers cannot cook for food, for example, due to some reason, other family members should not show each other's egos. Therefore, coordination is needed in family life in order to achieve harmony in the family.

Coordination and communication in the family is an effort that can be done by every woman to be able to do their *swadharma* in the family. *Swadharma* of Hindu women in the family is not only the responsibility of a woman in the family, but also the responsibility of all family members. One of the Hindu women's *swadharma* in the family is to achieve harmony within the family. Harmony in the family will be achieved if all family members can help each other and mutually do a coordination with regardless of their respective ego.

Attempting to manage time well can help Hindu women in dealing with doing the *swadharma* in the family. A Hindu woman should realize that she has a great responsibility in the family, then she must be able to manage her time to carry out all these obligations. If she is able to set the time as well, then her *swadharma* in the family will be done as well, too. Having so much *swadharma* as a Hindu woman in the family,

she must be able to calculate the time needed to do every *swadharma*. With these calculations, then Hindu women will be able to set the time so that she finally can carry out *swadharma* in the family as well. In addition to managing time well, good coordination and communication are also needed to support the alignment of Hindu women in the family. The harmony of Hindu women in doing their *swadharma* in the family requires the support of all family members.

Hindu women must be able to manage time, so then it will make them be able to carry out obligations in the family. In addition to good time management, it also required coordination and good communication among all family members. Coordination and good communication among family members will suppress egoism among family members, so that harmony in doing Hindu *swadharma* in the family will be achieved. This is in line with the assumptions of social relations theory. Social relations theory sees instrumental action involving a single actor who rationally calculates the best way to achieve the goal. While strategic actions involve two or more individuals coordinating purposive rational actions in achieving goals. Communicative action in which the agencies involved are coordinated not through egocentric calculations to achieve success but through action to achieve understanding. In communicative action, participants are not oriented towards their own success as they pursue individual goals under conditions in which they can harmonize their action plan based on the definition of a common situation (Habermas 1979: 97).

## **2.2.2 Efforts to Do the *Swadharma* Harmoniously in Society**

Coordination and communication are also indispensable as an effort in implementing Hindu women's *swadharma* in society. With good coordination and communication among all members of society, it will then facilitate Hindu women in doing their *swadharma* harmoniously in society. The ability of Hindu women to do interaction in society can determine their position in society. Understanding and knowledge of communication are very important for Hindu women. Book (1980) in Cangara (2010, 19-20) states that communication is a transaction, a symbolic process that requires people to organize their environment by 1) building relationships with people; 2) through the exchange of information; 3) to strengthen the attitudes and behavior of others; and 4) trying to change attitudes and behavior. By doing communication, Hindu women can manage their environment in implementing their *swadharma*. Doing exchange information related to Hindu women's *swadharma* in society is basically recommended, so it does not become an obstacle in doing it.

Cooperation among members of the community will support the achievement in doing the *swadharma* of Hindu women. All components of society must cooperate with each other to achieve common goals, because society is a unified system.

The teachings of Hinduism see the human society as a great family born from the same origin of God. The book of *Sruti* describes that human is born from human cosmic (the universal human who encompasses the universe), which is none other than God Almighty.

In the *Yajurveda* scriptures, it is described that God has created four components of society, namely *brahmana*, *ksatria*, *waisya*, and *sudra*. These four components were created through parts of His body. *Brahman* was created through the mouth of God, the *ksatrya* was born from His arm, the *waisya* was born from the thighs and the *sudra* was born from the feet of God. The description clearly shows that the human talent group is part of the social or community system (Donder, 2009: 44-45).

Harmony or balance in society will be achieved if all components in society can work together to carry out their obligations. Balance and harmony in society is the responsibility of all members of society. All levels of society must support each other for the sake of achieving harmony in society.

### **2.2.3 Efforts to Do the Swadharma Harmoniously in the Workplace**

Good communication in doing the *swadharma* by Hindu women in the workplace is very instrumental. Communication efforts, coordination, and cooperation can be done by Hindu women in doing their *swadharma* to get the harmony in the workplace. There, Hindu women should be able to maintain good social relations in the environment. Good relationships among others greatly facilitate them in doing their *swadharma* to get the harmony in the workplace. Coordination when unable to attend the workplace is essential, so that others are able to tolerate and help to replace temporary their *swadharma* at work.

Maintaining good cooperation in the workplace is an effort that can be done by

Hindu women in implementing their *swadharma*. Coordination among co-workers in the workplace can facilitate them in doing their *swadharma*. In addition to being able to coordinate and cooperate well, Hindu women must also always fill themselves with knowledge. According to Ni Made Dresti, in competing in the world of Hindu, women must have the ability in their field. Always have self-discipline with science is one of the efforts to do their *swadharma* in the workplace to get harmony (interviewed on July 20, 2015).

Cooperation and coordination conducted among co-workers will form a good relationship in achieving common goals. This is in accordance with social relations theory which views that strategic action involves two or more individuals coordinating purposive rationale in achieving the goal. Communicative action in which the agencies involved are coordinated not through egocentric calculations to achieve success, but through action to achieve understanding. In communicative action, participants are not oriented towards their own success as they pursue individual goals under conditions in which they can harmonize their action plan based on the definition of a common situation (Habermas 1979: 97). Good coordination and communication in the workplace will make a common understanding to achieve common goals. Thus, the harmony of the Hindu women in doing their *swadharma* in the workplace will be achieved.

### **III. Conclusion**

Efforts made by Hindu women in doing their *swadharma* to make life harmony within the family and the community in the



world of work are efforts to maintain harmony in family and community life. With good communication, coordination, and cooperation conducted by Hindu women in doing their *swadharma*, then the purpose of harmony will be achieved. Communication, coordination, and cooperation on every component in a system can alleviate all obstacles faced by Hindu women in doing their *swadharma*. When all of the *swadharma* in Hinduism can be done by women as well, hence, the harmony of life in the family, society, and workplace will be achieved. Achieving the harmony of life is the responsibility of all components of society. All components of society must support each other for the achievement of common goals.

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